

## CAERETAN SPOUTED LEBETES

(Con le tavv. XXXIX-XL f. t.)

In an early study of a very special Etruscan red-figured vase-shape shared by three different pottery centers in Etruria active during the second half of the 4th century B.C.,<sup>1</sup> *Caere* (Cerveteri) was singled out from amongst *Falerii Veteres* (Cività Castellana) and *Tarquinii* as the center responsible for one of the five spouted lebetes (here no. 1, *tav. XXXIX a-b*) then brought together for investigation. A recent visit to the World Heritage Museum of the University of Illinois at Urbana has now made it possible to add a hitherto unpublished example (no. 2, *tavv. XXXIX c; XL a-b*) to what has been, up to the present, the sole known *Caeretan* spouted lebes.

The designation «lebetes» was made by J. D. Beazley after an example in Toronto and another in the Vatican because he saw in them the general form of a nuptial lebes but also something of a *situla*<sup>2</sup>. The vase possesses three handles -two upright looped handles, one to each side, and a third vertical handle at the back to aid pouring through a spout at the front. For the *Caeretan* spouted lebes, the spout is relatively long and tapering, whereas the *Faliscan* and *Tarquinian* counterparts possess a small lion-head spout<sup>3</sup>.

### 1. ROME, VATICAN CITY (*tav. XXXIX a-b*)

Museo Gregoriano Etrusco, Inv. no. Z109

Height, 27 cm., with or without lid?

Two confronting female heads in profile; bird between the profile heads.

The large incised circle for the eye of the left profile head is, of course, modern.

BEAZLEY, *EVP*, p. 148; A.D. TRENDALL, *Vasi antichi dipinti del Vaticano*.

*Vasi italioti ed etruschi a figure rosse* (Vatican, 1953), p. 237 and LXI, k and l; DEL CHIARO, *loc. cit.*, pl. 44, figs. 3 and 4.

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<sup>1</sup> M. DEL CHIARO, *One Vase-Shape, Three Etruscan Fabrics*, in LXXVI, 1969, pp. 122-127.

<sup>2</sup> BEAZLEY, *EVP*, p. 148.

<sup>3</sup> DEL CHIARO, *loc. cit.*, pl. 44, figs. 1 and 2; pl. 45, figs. 1-4; and pl. 46, figs. 1-3. A special study of *Faliscan* spouted lebetes, based on a goodly number of examples in the Musée du Louvre, will appear in a future number of the *Revue Archéologique*.

2. URBANA, ILLINOIS (*tavv.* XXXIX c; XL a-b)<sup>4</sup>

University of Illinois, World Heritage Museum

Inv. no. 12.3.1

Height, 21 cm.; with lid, 24 cm.

Two confronting female heads in profile; bird between the profile heads.

Quite remarkably, both spouted lebetes (nos. 1 and 2) retain their original lids which fit tightly over a vertical flange or lip that encircles the mouth of the vase. The unusually tall and thick, spike-like handle attached to the top of the Caeretan lid is conspicuously different from the few rare extant Faliscan counterparts. No lids have survived for known Tarquinian spouted lebetes. The lid of an unpublished Faliscan specimen in the Louvre shows a much smaller and better proportioned spike, yet another but published Louvre Faliscan example possesses a more button-like knob<sup>5</sup>. Although the lids of the lebetes nos. 1 and 2 have blacked-out spikes, the overall decorative scheme differs: no. 1, the Vatican vase, exhibits a broad band directly below the spike handle in which appears a wave pattern enhanced by abbreviated crescents. On the vertical face of the lid, there is painted a simple upright tongue motif. For no. 2, the Illinois vase, the upright tongue pattern is located on the sloping surface, whereas the vertical side carries a series of alternating straight and wiggly lines. Essentially the same for both lebetes, the subsidiary floral/vegetal decoration — comprised of trumpet-like cones, scrolls, and leaves — is located at the back of the vase where it « blossoms » from beneath and to the sides of the high vertical handle. The height and form of the handle, may be distinctively Caeretan, to judge by the markedly different vertical looped handles that barely rise above the mouth of the vase for Faliscan and Tarquinian examples<sup>6</sup>.

Even the most brief examination of the chief decoration on the body of these two lebetes should suffice to recognize the hand of a single vase-painter. This can be readily corroborated by an analysis of the style of drawing to be found in the confronting female heads and the character of the bird placed between. This figural composition can be said to be identical for the two lebetes but for the fat, non-descript bird (goose/dove/pigeon?)<sup>7</sup> which struts in opposite directions on the two vases. The contours of the profiles, the outline of the neck, and the delineation (hairline) of hair and flesh for all four heads are surprisingly similar, almost con-

<sup>4</sup> Courtesy, World Heritage Museum; photos, Caroline Buckler. I wish to thank Betty L. Wendland of the Heritage Museum for all kindness during my examination of the Etruscan material in the collection.

<sup>5</sup> DEL CHIARO, *loc. cit.*, pl. 46, figs. 1-3. See also, V. JOLIVET, *Recherches sur la céramique étrusque à figures rouges tardive du musée du Louvre*, Paris, 1982, p. 143, fig. 8 where the shape is given as « lèbès-situle ».

<sup>6</sup> See supra 3.

<sup>7</sup> A. D. TRENDAL (*op. cit.*, p. 237) sees an « oca » (goose); but is not the beak too short or small?

gruent. Because the highly fugitive white paint — generally used for the flesh color of women in Etruscan red-figure vase-painting — is better preserved on vase no. 1 than no. 2, various details painted directly on the white paint — eye, eyebrow, nostril, mouth, ear, earring, necklace, and the like — can be more easily distinguished.

Despite the fact that it is now difficult to compare the facial details for the two sets of confronting female heads owing to the state of preservation of the white paint, enough remains of the profiles to disclose the unquestionable similarity in the line of the nose, the full puffy lips, and the rounded chin to offer convincing evidence for single authorship. The most characteristic detail for these heads, however, is found in the distinctive rendering — with seemingly diluted glaze-paint — of the kinky or frizzy hair which imparts a somewhat up-to-date coiffure. Only the Vatican lebes (no. 1) shows a narrow and tight laurel wreath or diadem painted in white. The strange bird, which struts with one foot raised high, faces to the left on the Vatican vase (see *tav.* XXXIX *b*) but in the opposite direction on the Illinois vase (see *tav.* XL *a*).

In both instances, the bird is depicted entirely in white paint on which, unfortunately, very little can yet be seen of the brownish-black detailing. Nonetheless, some of this detailing is preserved and discloses an eye created by a simple circle and central dot and, curiously — if not uniquely — a dotted outline running continuously around the entire contour of each bird. Interestingly, this dotted delineation is also present on the Vatican lebes at the flesh along the hairline of the female — not visible, however, on the Illinois lebes. It should be pointed out, that the women on the Vatican vase (see *tav.* XXXIX *a*) possesses the dotted outline along the hair as well as the flesh.

Through an observation made in my far earlier study of the Vatican spouted lebes (no. 1)<sup>8</sup>, I noted that, apart from the bird and the unusual coiffure, the confronting female heads did not misconform completely from the female profiles — wearing the *kekryphalos* or full-sakkos headcover — depicted on oinochoai of the Torcop Group<sup>9</sup>; vases which I have attributed to Caeretan workmanship<sup>10</sup>. Investigation of the Torcop Group has made me aware of a goodly number of individual painters, one of whom may very well be the artist responsible for the two Caeretan spouted lebetes presented here; namely, the Populonia Torcop Painter, perhaps the most prolific artist of that group (e.g. *tav.* XL *c*)<sup>11</sup>. Despite the

<sup>8</sup> DEL CHIARO, *loc. cit.*, p. 124.

<sup>9</sup> *Oinochoe*, Shape VII. Florence, Museo Archeologico, no inv. number. Height, 27 cm. *St. Etr.* XXVIII, 1960, p. 145, no. 8.

<sup>10</sup> See M. DEL CHIARO, *Etruscan Oinochoai of the Torcop Group*, in *St. Etr.* XXVIII, 1960, pp. 137-164; hereafter, *Torcop Group*. See also M. DEL CHIARO, *Etruscan Red-Figured Vase-Painting at Caere* Berkeley, 1974, pp. 68ff; and Jolivet, *op. cit.*, pp. 49ff.

<sup>11</sup> DEL CHIARO, *Torcop Group*, pp. 142ff. and pl. XI, figs. 4-6.

not unwarranted observations based on the Vatican lebetes recently made by V. Jolivet who believes the vase is better assigned to Tarquinian manufacture<sup>12</sup>, my present re-study of the vase reaffirms my conviction that it — and subsequently the Illinois lebes — is a Caeretan product.

The Vatican and Illinois spouted lebetes well serve to increase our knowledge of the activity of red-figured vase-painters and potters working at Caere during the second half of the 4th century B.C. and, at the same time, augment the number of Caeretan spouted lebetes in relation to those of Faliscan or Tarquinian fabrication.

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<sup>12</sup> JOLIVET, *op. cit.*, p. 33, note 13 and p. 50 where analogies are made between the subsidiary floral/vegetal decoration on the Vatican spouted lebes and Tarquinian red-figure. More poignantly, however, attention is called by Jolivet to the parallel character of the «Vatican» bird and a white bird (goose or swan?) on a red-figured *skyphos* in Berkeley (see M. DEL CHIARO, *The Funnel Group. A. Tarquinian Red-Figured Fabric*, Florence, 1974, pl. XVIII). Provocatively, the bird on this Berkeley *skyphos* of the Tarquinia Funnel Group, does show — upon re-examination and not noted by Jolivet or by me in my earlier study — a short dash and dot «outline» on the white paint at the bird's outer contour. This detailing may prove of considerable significance for attribution once more vases with this distinctive feature may come to our attention.



*a*



*b*



*c*



a



b



c